

Hello my name is Margaret Osiecki and I am from Avon Ct. I am testifying on the Governor's proposed budget H.B.No.5037. This is an Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023 that does not include critical funding for our safety net providers and their employees. I am writing this letter with the hope that you may try to understand the struggles of Connecticut's direct support providers and those who rely on their services.

After decades of underfunding Connecticut's direct support providers, many are in crisis mode because the effects of the pandemic have impacted their pay. Many programs that are utilized to care and support Connecticut's residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have lost their ability to attract and retain direct care workers and other employees. This staff is critically important to the safety and well- being of many of Connecticut's residents (IDD), including in my own family.

I have two sons and a nephew with Down Syndrome and two of them are already facing inadequate staffing in their day programs. My nephew is in the group home and since Covid started he has had to sit at home all day because underfunding has made it so there is nobody to take him to his day program that allows him to interact with others. It is so heartbreaking to see him struggle for the last two years. He is full of energy and loves to be out and about so the sitting at home caused him to develop lots of bad behaviors and depression. He and our family have been struggling to help him deal with that.

Without your help, our state community service delivery system will continue to shrink and our loved ones will bear the hurt of this loss. We are already experiencing the worst staffing crisis that services have ever seen, which has resulted in an inability to resume programs paused during Covid and which have caused a rebound effect for family caregivers who are unable to return to work and contribute to Connecticut's economy.

Now more than ever, we need to ensure that critically necessary funding of \$150 million is included in this year's budget for the state's nonprofit providers who care for our loved ones on a daily basis. We argue your support and ask that you add this funding to the budget before the committee. My children and my nephew matter

Fondly  
Margaret Osiecki.